

lacked coverage. You know it, and I do, too. You know that I and Hillary and the Vice President, we have always believed it is wrong for any American, much less any child, not to have affordable, quality health care. I know that the American Academy of Pediatrics believes that. I will keep working to change that as long as I am President. I will keep looking for ways to end this unconscionable and growing gap of uninsured care.

Our hospitals will continue to have problems—and again, I would say, this has nothing to do—and you can help us with this—this has nothing to do with the Government taking over health care. The Government's not taking over health care in the CHIP program or Medicare or Medicaid.

If we'd let these people—next to the kids, the fastest growing group of uninsured people are 55 to 65 years old, who retire and can't get employment-based health insurance anymore. We ought to let them buy into Medicare. You know, I get into all these fights with the insurance companies—and I hate to fight with them all the time—but the truth is, America has a system of financing health care that dictates high levels of uninsured, which dictates enormous burdens on the health care system of the country and burdens on everybody that buys insurance.

And they can deny otherwise as long as they want to, but all you have to do is look around at other examples, and you know it's simply not true. There is no other conceivable explanation. It is the system by which we finance our care which has got us in the fix we're in now.

And so we are trying to do this, and we are trying to do the bill for the disabled, and there are lots of other things we can do. But if you look at everything we do that's going to make a difference, it's because we have changed the financing. And those are facts, and you can get them out there.

For the last 6½ years, I have had the great honor to serve as President of this country. I have about a year and 4 months left, maybe a little more. I've worked hard to turn this country around and then to keep the American people always thinking about tomorrow, about the challenges and the opportunities of the new century and the new millennium.

Well, now we have turned America around. And the great test is whether we are going to take this moment and shape our tomorrows. That's what you do every day, every time you take some preventive measure, every time you do something to help a child. There may be some screaming and crying, but you know they're all going to be better off tomorrow.

I just would like to see all of us here in Washington take the same attitude toward the future of all our children's tomorrows that you take toward each child's tomorrow. If we do, America's best days lie in the new millennium.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. Joel J. Alpert, president, and Dr. Donald E. Cook, president-elect, American Academy of Pediatrics.

Memorandum on School-Based Health Insurance Outreach for Children

October 12, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Agriculture

Subject: School-Based Health Insurance Outreach for Children

The lack of health insurance for millions of Americans remains one of the great challenges facing this Nation. To help address this issue, I worked with the bipartisan Congress to create the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the single largest expansion of children's health insurance in 30 years. The 1997 Balanced Budget Act allocated \$24 billion over 5 years to extend health care coverage to millions of uninsured children in working families. CHIP builds on the Medicaid program, which currently provides health coverage to most poor children, and together, these programs could cover most uninsured children.

Yet too few uninsured children eligible for CHIP or Medicaid participate. Barriers to enrollment include parents' lack of knowledge about the options; cultural and language

barriers; complicated application and enrollment processes; and the “stigma” associated with so-called welfare programs. The Vice President and I have made removing these barriers to enrollment a high priority. In 1997, I launched a major public-private outreach campaign called “Insure Kids Now.” Foundations, corporations, health care providers, consumer advocates, and others have participated through activities such as setting up enrollment booths at supermarkets and promoting the national toll-free number (1-877-KIDS NOW) on grocery bags, TV and radio ads, and posters. In addition, we created a Federal Interagency Task Force on Children’s Health Insurance Outreach in February 1998, which has implemented over 150 new activities to educate and train Federal workers and families nationwide about the availability of Medicaid and CHIP.

Today I am directing the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Education, and Agriculture to focus children’s health insurance outreach on a place where we know we can find uninsured children: schools. State experience indicates that school systems are an ideal place to identify and enroll uninsured children in Medicaid or CHIP because schools are accepted by parents as a conduit for important information. In addition, health insurance promotes access to needed health care, which experts confirm contributes to academic success. We have learned that children without health insurance suffer more from asthma, ear infections, and vision problems—treatable conditions that frequently interfere with classroom participation; and children without health insurance are absent more frequently than their peers. As we strive for high standards in every school and classroom, it is essential that we help families ensure their children come to school ready to learn.

Therefore, I hereby direct you, in consultation with State and local agencies, to report to me a set of recommendations on specific actions to encourage and integrate health insurance enrollment and outreach for children into schools, consistent with the mission of your agency. This report shall include:

- Specific short- and long-term recommendations on administrative and

legislative actions for making school-based outreach to enroll children in Medicaid and CHIP an integral part of school business. These may include:

- Technical assistance and other support to school districts and schools engaged in outreach;
- Suggestions on how to effectively use the school lunch program application process to promote enrollment in health insurance programs;
- Lists of practices that have proven effective, such as integration of outreach and enrollment activities into school events such as registration, sports physicals, and vision and hearing testing; and
- Model State CHIP and Medicaid policies and plans for school-based outreach.
- A summary of key findings from the national and regional conferences scheduled for this fall on the topic of school-based outreach. These conferences will bring together national and State education officials, Medicaid and CHIP directors, public policy experts, and community-based organizations to examine the use of schools to facilitate the enrollment of children in Medicaid and CHIP; evaluation tools to monitor the effectiveness of current school-based outreach efforts; and best practices in school-based outreach and enrollment for children’s health insurance.
- Recommendations on methods to evaluate CHIP and Medicaid outreach strategies in schools. Performance measures should be an integral part of school-based CHIP and Medicaid outreach strategies, as they can inform policymakers on the effectiveness of these strategies, as well as help to identify areas of improvement.

I direct the Department of Health and Human Services to serve as the coordinating agency to assist in the development and integration of recommendations and to report back to me in 6 months. The recommended actions should be consistent with Medicaid and CHIP rules for coverage of appropriate health- and outreach-related activities. They should be developed in collaboration with

State and local officials as well as community leaders and should include recommendations on fostering effective partnerships between education and health agencies. These recommended activities should be complementary, aggressive, and consistent with my Administration's overall initiative to cover uninsured children.

William J. Clinton

Statement on World Population Growth

October 12, 1999

Today we mark the day that the world's population reportedly reaches 6 billion. It took just 12 years—from 1987 to today—for the world's population to expand from 5 to 6 billion people. We should be thankful that people today live longer and healthier lives than ever before. But over the next few years, this rapid growth and its effect on our environment and quality of life will pose difficult challenges for all of us.

In 1994 the United States helped forge a consensus at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt, on a comprehensive approach to stabilizing world population growth. We agreed to work with other nations to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, to improve the status of women, to enhance educational opportunities for children, and to support voluntary family planning and related health care.

My administration has made important strides in meeting these objectives. At home, we have increased funding for family planning and reproductive health services, which have helped reduce teen pregnancies and abortions. Overseas, we have invested more than \$5.5 billion in over 100 countries on health and population initiatives and on women's empowerment.

We have also worked to protect our environment and ensure that it can sustain the development needs of a growing population. We are learning that technology can help developing countries grow while bypassing some of the environmental costs of the industrial age. We must promote that technology so that we can address both climate change

and the challenge of providing clean energy for all the world's citizens.

Finally, we have recognized that the best way to stabilize population growth is to fight poverty and to build healthy, growing economies in the developing world. The debt relief package the world's wealthiest nations agreed to in Cologne this year will help us do that. Last month, I went even further, announcing that the United States will forgive 100 percent of the debt owed us by the world's least developed countries if they will use the savings to address basic human needs. And I committed the United States to a new effort to accelerate the development of vaccines for diseases that devastate the developing world.

As we mark this day, the central question we face is not simply how many people will live on this planet, but how they will live. We must refuse to accept a future in which one part of humanity lives on the cutting edge of a new economy, while another part lives on the edge of survival. And we must work for the day when all people have the education, health, security, safe environment, and freedom to lift their lives.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the Operation of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act

October 12, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 214 of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Expansion Act of 1990 (19 U.S.C. 2702(f)), I transmit herewith to the Congress the Third Report on the Operation of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 12, 1999.

Remarks at the Eighth Millennium Evening at the White House

October 12, 1999

[The First Lady began the program making brief remarks and introducing the evening's featured speakers: Dr. Vinton Cerf, senior